

BMN Trip Report

Woodland Walk Trail (June 11, 2011)

By Mark Johnston



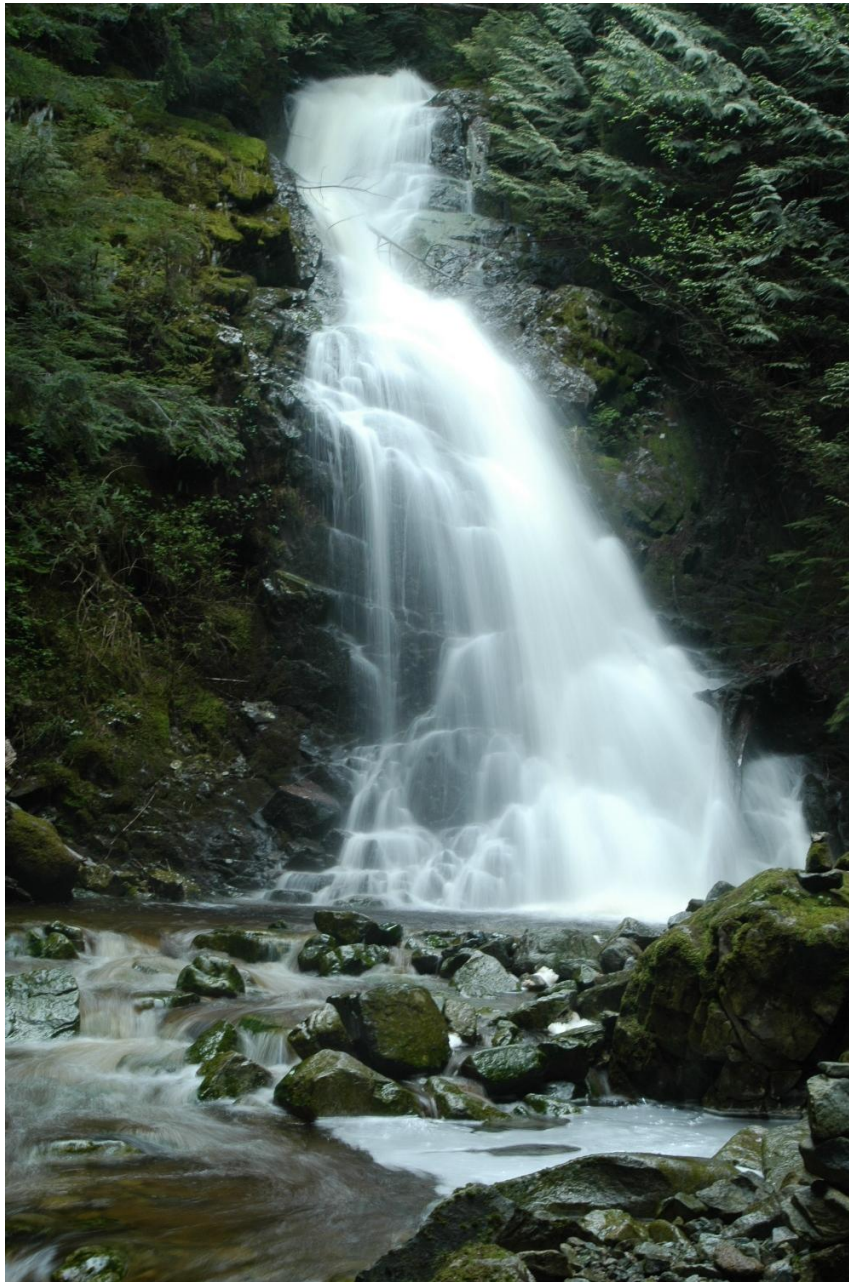
First group crossing Pritchett Creek with the aid of a rope on BMN's annual public hike.
Christina Saremba photo.

For a number of years we have celebrated the anniversary of the creation of Pinecone Burke Provincial Park by leading a public hike along the Woodland Walk trail. This year's hike was our best-attended. By one count there were 56 participants; we had 53 sign our waiver.

As has become customary, we split into a couple of groups. Don led the first and larger group (of which I was a part); Ian, the second and smaller party. Skies were cloudy, but the air temperature seemed a bit warmer than last year. We made our usual stops: first, at a rocky area beneath the power line with a view across to Eagle Ridge; next, at the former site of a cabin, where only a few rusting artifacts remain; and then, by a mammoth cedar stump, which always elicits oohs and ahhs. Not long after, we reached the old-growth Douglas-fir that marks the end of the Woodland Walk. Taking an extended break, we

admired the tree, and some descended the steep path beside it to the cascading falls on Coho Creek.

As on last year's hike, we extended the Woodland Walk by means of a rough loop to take in a bluff viewpoint and also magnificent "Saw Blade Falls." The falls were in glorious springtime flood, but, given the drop in temperature at the base, we didn't linger long.



"Saw Blade Falls" in full flood. Terry Puls photo.

With such large groups, it's always a challenge to try to stay at least somewhat alert to wildlife. Along the power line I heard both Pacific slope and willow flycatchers. At a number of points I heard a Wilson's warbler singing, and on the way back took the time to spot one or two. It's such a thrill to catch a glimpse of this golden-coloured bird amid the bright green spring foliage! Those of us in the first group also saw a juvenile western toad negotiating a steep, trailside embankment. Its progress was steady, but its style clumsy. It would tip onto its back, right itself, then leap forward until losing its balance again.

While our two hiking groups proceeded toward the Woodland Walk's endpoint, one of our club members, Elaine, tarried midway to root out a patch of lamium (a garden plant also known as dead nettle) beginning to take hold. She was able to pull up enough of the invasive plant to fill about 10 garbage bags, which we, on our return, transported back down the mountain. This patch will need further work, and there is another one lower on the mountain which should be tackled as well.

All in all, it was a rewarding day. A big thank you to the many club members who helped make the outing a success!